

Sober-mindedness

Prefs'd upon

Young People.

I N A

DISCOURSE

O N

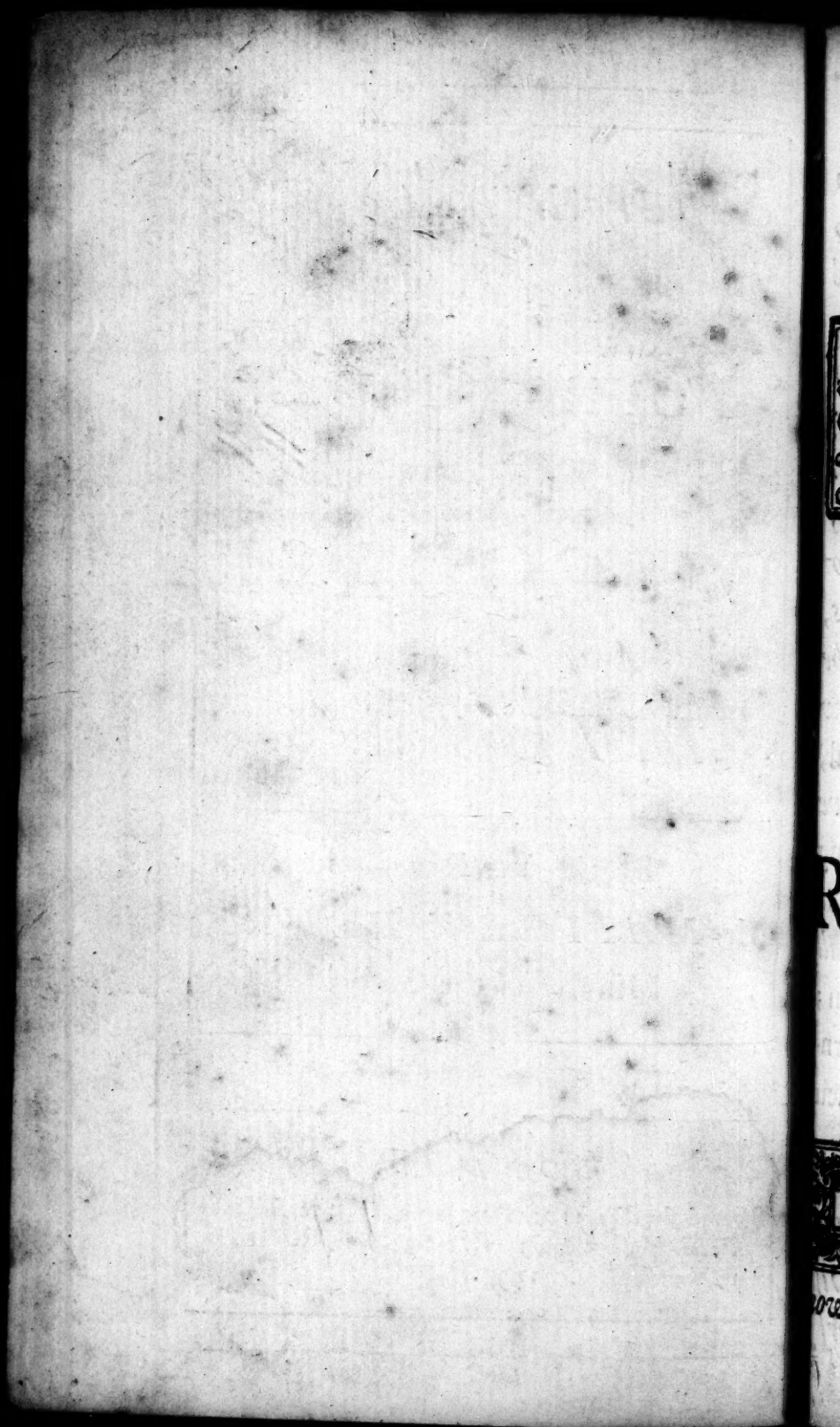
TITUS II. 6.

By the late Reverend
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Minister of the Gospel.

THE FIFTH EDITION.

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TO THE
READER.



It has been the laudable Practice of many good Ministers, both in City and Country, now about this Time of the Year,

to preach Sermons particularly to Young People, to awaken them to a Sense of their great Concern. And it is very feasonable to do it now, not only because in these Days of Leisure, they have more Time to attend on such an Opportunity; but because in these Days of Liberty and Recess from Business, Young People are more exposed to Temptations, which they have special need to be guarded against. Nor know I how we can better do Honour to Christ than by thus endeavouring to serve the great Intentions of his Coming into the World, and to bring in to him a Seed to serve him, which shall be accounted to him for a Generation that from the Womb of the Morning he may have the Dew of the Youth.

Upon such an Occasion as this the Substance of the following Discourse

To the Reader.

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course was preach'd t'other day in London: But I could not have persuaded myself to publish it, had I not been requested to do it by a Number of very hopeful promising Youths, to whom I have lately come related, for the present, as a Catechist; in which Service, though it has been look'd upon as one of the lowest Branches of the Ministerial Office, yet it is the Top of my Ambition, to be found thro' Grace skilful, faithful, and successful.

To their Service I dedicate it, not forgetting my Friends in the Country, the Young Ones of whose Families I must ever have a deep and tender Concern for. My Prayer both for the one, and for the other is, that they may betimes know the God of their Fathers, so as to serve him with.

a perfect Heart, and a willing Mind;
so know him and Jesus Christ whom he
 has sent, *as may be* Life Eternal to
 them.

Jan. 3. 1712-13.

Mat. Henry.

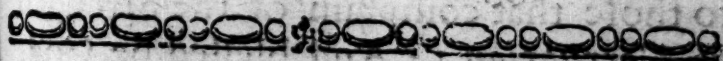
Sober



Sober-mindedness

Prefs'd upon

YOUNG PEOPLE.



TITUS II. 6.

*Young Men likewise exhort to be
sober-minded.*



PAUL the *Aged* is here directing *Titus* a young Minister, whom he calls *his own Son in the common Faith*, what Subjects to preach upon; in the **Choice** of which, Ministers have

need of Wisdom, should pray for Wisdom, and take Direction from this and other Scripture-Directories.

In general, he must *speake the Things which become sound Doctrine*, v. 1. He must preach the *Doctrine of Christ*, the Truth as it is in Jesus, the great *Mystery of Godliness*, that *sound or wholesome Doctrine*, which is *good for Food*, spiritual Food, with which Souls are *nourished up*, 1 Tim. 4. 6. and good for *Medicine* too; 'tis *healing Doctrine*, as it speaks *Pardon of Sin* to those that complain of the Terror of *Guilt*, and promiseth *Power against Sin* to those that complain of the Strength of *Corruption*: And blessed be God, this *sound*, this *healing Doctrine* is preached *to you* in its Purity, and I hope in its Power, in Season and out of Season.

But this is not all, he must speak other *Things which become this sound Doctrine*, oppos'd to those *Jewish Fables and Commandments of Men*, with which *they of the Circumcision* corrupted the Doctrine of Christ, Chap. 1. 10, 14. The best way to guard against

against them, will be to preach the *Duties* of Christianity with the *Doctrines* of it; the *Truth which is after Godliness*, Chap. 1. 1. Practical Religion, which *regulates* and *governs* the Heart and Life, is that which *becomes* the Doctrine of Christianity; which it becomes the *Teachers* of that Doctrine to *preach*, and both they and the Professors of that Doctrine to make conscience of. The *Grace of God that brings Salvation teacheth us*; and therefore the Ministers of the Word of that Grace must teach you, and all that hope for that Salvation must learn to *deny Ungodliness, and worldly fleshly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly*. Right Notions will not serve without good Morals. Young Peoples *saying their Catechism*, if it were the best Catechism in the World, saying it never so *well*, and saying nothing against it, will not save them, if the Temper of their Minds, and the Tenor of their Conversation, be not agreeable to the *sound Doctrine* they converse with, of a piece with it, and such as *becomes it*.

to

Sober-mindedness

Titus is here particularly directed to preach upon the Duties required from Christians of each Sex, and each Age of Life. He must teach *aged Men* how they ought to carry themselves, so as that their *hoary Head* being found in the way of *Righteousness*, might be a *Crown of Glory to them*, v. 2. And the *aged Women* likewise, v. 3. that they may teach the *young Women*, v. 4. And here in my Text, he is directed what Application to make to young Men. Thus *particular* should Ministers be in their Preaching, that they may, as far as may be, reach every one's *Case*, which is the likeliest way to reach every one's *Conscience*. Thus Ministers must endeavour *rightly to divide the Word of Truth*, and as wise and faithful Stewards in God's House to *give every one their Portion of Meat in due season*: And oh that every one would *take their Portion*, and feed upon it, and digest it, and instead of saying, this was for such a one, would learn to say, *This is for me*.

In dealing with young Men;

1. He is here directed to *exhort* them; *παρηγορεῖν*. He must *instruct* them what to do, that they might know their Duty; he must *put them in mind* of it, that they might know it; then when they had occasion to do it: he must *excite* and stir them up to it, and urge it upon them with Motives and Arguments; and he must *encourage* them in the doing of it, and *comfort* them that they may go on in it chearfully: all this is included in the Word here used for *exhorting*; and there is need of all this, and all little enough; for some are ignorant, and need to be taught, others are *careless* and need to be quicken'd; some think their Duty an *indifferent* thing, and on such we must press the Command which makes it *necessary*; others think it an *impracticable* thing, and to such we must preach the Grace that makes it *easy*.

In pressing Practical Godliness, 'tis hard to say which is more needful, *Persuasion* or *Direction*; and which will

will be most serviceable to our End, *good Rules* to shew us what we should do, or *good Reasons* to convince us that it is our Duty and Interest to do it. Perhaps some stand more in need of the one, others of the other, and the Scripture furnisheth us with abundant Matter for both; enough to furnish the *Man of God* for every good *Word* of this kind.

The Original Word *καλέω*, being a Compound of *καλέω* *voco*, might properly be render'd to *call to*, or *call upon*; and that's the Work of Ministers to be your *Monitors*. We *call to* you, we *call upon* you, frequently, and with Importunity, and as we see occasion, to *mind your Duty*, and not to trifle in it: to *take heed of Sin*, and not expose yourselves to it. This is the *Word behind you*, which is promis'd *Isa. 30. 10.* which shall say, *This is the Way, walk in it, and turn not aside to the Right-Hand or to the Left.*

Titus must *exhort* them in his *publick* Preaching, and in that must chuse out Words to reason with them. The
Rulers

press'd upon Young People. 13

Rulers of the Jewish Synagogue, after the reading of *the Law and the Prophets* in the Assembly, on the *Sabbath*, desired of *Paul* a *Word of Exhortation for the People*, Acts 13. 15. And publick Exhortations to those of one Age, Relation or Condition, may be of use to *others*, who are not to sit by as unconcern'd, but some way or other to accommodate it to themselves; for what we say unto some, we say unto all.

Yet this was not enough, he must *exhort them* in his *personal* Converse with them; must visit them at their Houses, and there give them this Admonition; must give it in a particular manner to those that he saw *needed it*, give it with Application; in this and the other Instance, you must be of a better Spirit, and carry it better. When he was in company with *young Men*, he must be giving them good Advice; and instead of allowing himself to be *vain* as they were, endeavour to make them *grave* as he was, Ministers must preach not only *in* the Pulpit, but *out* of it; their Converse must

must be a constant Sermon, and in that they may be more particular in the Application, and descend to *Persons* and *Cases* better than they can in their publick Ministry. Those Ministers who complain they would do this *statedly* and *solemnly*, but cannot *bring it to bear*, yet can have no Excuse for not doing it *occasionally*, when it comes in their way ; nor would seek an Excuse, if they had but a Heart to it.

2. That which he must exhort them to, is to be *sober-minded* ; all the Law that concerneth them in particular, is summ'd up in this one Word ; exhort them *σωφρονεῖν* to be *sober-minded*. It is a very significant comprehensive Word ; and has in it a Check to all the ill Habits and ill Courses that are so mischievous and ruining to young People. The Word speaks the Duty of *young Men*, but it is likewise *twice* used in the Directory for *young Women*, v. 4. *that they may teach the young Women to be sober*, ἵνα σωφρονίσωσι τὰς νέας, *that they may sober the young Women*, may give them

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them such Instructions and Examples, as may help to make them *sober*; and again, *ver. 5.* that they may *teach* them to be *sober*, *discreet*; so that it is the Duty of *young Women* as well as *young Men* to be *sober-minded*; it is an Exhortation proper for *both* the Sexes of that Age; and it is my Exhortation to all of that Age that are within Hearing to-day; *I beseech you suffer this Word of Exhortation*, receive it at your Peril, for if it come from God, it is at your utmost Peril to refuse it.

Doct. *It is the great Duty of all young People to be sober-minded.*

I shall endeavour to shew you, (1.) What this *Sober-mindedness* is, which *young People* must be exhorted to. And, (2.) What Considerations should engage you that are young to be *sober-minded*: and then, (3.) Make Application.

For the 1st. Let us see what it is that we press upon you, when we exhort you to be *sober-minded*. And I shall keep to the Original Word used in my Text, and the various Significations

of it. It is the same Word that is used to set forth the third part of our Christian Duty, and is put *first* of the three Lessons which the *Grace of God teacheth us*, to live *soberly*, σωφρονως, ver. 12. And in another place it is put last of three excellent Christian Graces: God hath given us the *Spirit of Power, and of Love*, and σωφρονισμῶς of a *sound Mind*, 2 Tim. 1. 7. And σωφρονισμῶς is put by *Plutarch* in general, for the *Education* of Youth; the *sobering* of them.

Give this Exhortation its full Latitude, and it speaks to you that are young these Nine things.

First, You must be *considerate and thoughtful*, and *not rash and heedless*. To be *sober-minded*, is to make use of our Reason, in *reasoning* with ourselves, and in *communing* with our *own Hearts*; to imploy those noble Powers and Capacities, by which we are distinguish'd from and dignified above the Beasts, for those great Ends for which we were endued with them, that we may not *receive the Grace of God* in them *in vain*, but being *rational*

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nal Creatures, may act *rationally*, as behoves us, as becomes us.

You learn'd to *talk* when you were Children, when will you learn to *think*, to think seriously, to think to the purpose ? Floating Thoughts your Heads are full of, foreign and impertinent ones, when will you be brought to *close* and *fixed* Thoughts ? To think with Concern and Application of the great things that *belong to your everlasting Peace and Welfare* ?

Some have recommended the Study of the *Mathematicks*, as proper to fix the Minds of young People, and bring them to *think*. I wish any thing would do it, but would much rather it were done by a deep Concern about the Soul and another World, which if it once prevail, will effectually *fix* the Thoughts and to the best Purpose ; for when once you come to see the Greatness of that God with whom you have to do, and the Weight of that Eternity you are standing upon the Brink of, you'll see it's time to *think*, high time to *look about you*.

Learn to think not only of what is just before you, which strikes the Senses,

ses, and affects the Imagination, but of the Causes and Consequences, and Reasons of things ; to discover Truths, compare them with one another, argue upon them, and apply them to yourselves, and to *bring them to a head* ; not to fasten upon that which *doth come first* into your Minds, but upon that which *should come first*, and which deserves to be first considered.

Multitudes are *undone* because they are *unthinking* ; Inconsideration is the Ruin of thousands, and many a precious Soul perisheth through meer Carelessness ; *Now therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your Ways* ; retire into your own Souls, begin an Acquaintance with them ; it will be the most profitable Acquaintance you can fall into, and will turn to the best account. While you are coveting to see the World, and to be acquainted with it, be not *Strangers at home*.

Take time to think ; desire to be alone now and then, and let not Solitude and Retirement be an Uneasiness to you ; for you have a Heart of your own that you may find Talk with, and

a God nigh unto you, with whom you may have a pleasing Communion.

Learn to *think freely*, God invites you to do so; *Come now and let us reason together.* We desire not you should take things *upon Trust*, but enquire impartially into them, as the *noble Bereans*, who search'd the *Scriptures daily*, whether those things were so which the Apostles told them. Pure Christianity and serious Godliness fear not the Scrutiny of a *free Thought*, but despise the impotent Malice of a *prejudic'd* one.

There are those, I find, who under the Pretence of being *Free-thinkers*, by sly Insinuations endeavour to shock young Peoples Belief of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, and undermine all Revealed Religion, by turning sacred things into jest and ridicule: But they usurp the honourable Character of *Free-thinkers*; it doth not belong to them; they are as far from the *Freedom* they pretend to, as they are from the *Sincerity* they protest against: for 'tis certain, Pride and Affectation of Singularity, and a Spirit of Opposition
and

and Contradiction, do as much *enslave* the Thoughts on the one hand, as an implicit Faith and Obedience on the other hand. *While they promise Men Liberty*, they do but *deceive* them, and under colour of being sole *Masters of Reason*, and *ridiculing* all that agree not with them, they as arbitrarily impose upon Mens Credulity, as ever Popes and Councils did under colour of being sole *Masters of Faith*, and *anathematizing* all that differ from them.

Learn to think *for your selves*, to think *of your selves*, to think *with Application*. Think what you are, and what you are capable of; think who made you, and what you were made for; for what End you were endued with the Powers of Reason, and attended by the inferior Creatures; think what you have been doing since you came into the World, of the great Work you were sent into the World about, of the *Vanity of Childhood and Youth*, and how unavoidably the Years of them are *past away as a Tale that is told*, and whether therefore it be not time, *high time* for the youngest of you to begin to be reli-

religious, and to *enter in at the strait Gate.*

And as to your particular Actions, do not *walk at all adventures*, as those do that *despise their own ways*; but consider what you do before you do it, that you may not have occasion to repent of it afterwards; do nothing rashly, but always speak and act under the Government of the *great Law of Consideration.* *Ponder the Path of your Feet*, that it may be a strait Path.

Some People take a pride in being careless; tell them of such and such a thing that they were warn'd about, they turn it off with this Excuse, that for their parts they *never heed*, they *mind not* what is said to them, nor ever thought of it since; and so *glory in their Shame.*

But be not you thus negligent; for then, and not till then, there begins to be hopes of young People, when they begin to *set their Hearts to all these things that are testified* unto them, and to think of them with the Reason of Men, and the Concern they deserve.

Secondly,

Secondly, You must be *cautious and prudent*, and *not wilful and heady*. The Word in the Text is the same that is render'd, *v. 5. to be discreet; prudenter agere*. You must not only think rationally, but when you have done so, you must *act wisely*, and so as will be most for your true *Interest*; *walk circumspectly*, look before you, look about you, look under your Feet, and pick your way, *not as Fools, but as Wise*.

David's Purpose when he set out in the World was, *I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way*; and his Prayer was, *Lord, when wilt thou come unto me?* Psal. 101. 2. And accordingly we find, 1 Sam. 18. 14. his Purpose perform'd, and his Prayer answer'd, *He behav'd himself wisely in all his Ways, and the Lord was with him*. Those that *govern themselves*, God will *guide*; but will justly leave those that *love to wander, to wander endlessly*.

Put away childish Follies with other *childish things*, and do not all your Days *think and speak as Children*. E-
spouse

spouse Principles of Wisdom; fix to yourselves Rules of Wisdom, and be ruled by those Rules, and acted by those Principles.

'Tis the *Wisdom of the Prudent to understand his own way*, his own Business, not to censure other Peoples; and this *Wisdom* will in all Cases be *profitable to direct* what Measures, what Steps to take.

Youth is apt to be *bold* and *venturous*, and therefore *resolute* and *peremptory*, to its great prejudice. But be not you so; let Reason and Conscience, according to the Duty of their Place, give check to the Violence of Appetite and Passion; let them rectify the Mistakes, and over-rule the hasty Dictates of *Humour* and *Fancy*, and reduce the *arbitrary* and *exorbitant* Power of those Tyrants.

How often doth *Solomon* press it upon the young Man he takes under his Tuition? *My Son, be wise, Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get Wisdom, get Understanding.* You that are *launching out* into the World, must take *Wisdom* to be your Pilot, or
you

you are in danger of splitting upon some Rock or other; this must be your *Pillar of Cloud and Fire*, which you must follow the Conduct of through this Wilderness.

Be *diffident* of your own Judgments, and jealous of yourselves, that you do not take things *right*, or not take them *intire*, and for that reason afraid lest the Resolutions, which are the Result of your Considerations, should prove *wrong*, and therefore leave room for *second Thoughts*. Say not, *I will* do so and so, I'm resolv'd *I will*, whatever may be said to the contrary; *I will* walk in *the Way of my Heart*, and in *the Sight of my Eyes*, whatever it cost me. Never have any *Will*, but what is guided by *Wisdom*.

And therefore in every Case of Moment and Difficulty, be willing to be advis'd by your Friends, and depend more upon *their* Judgment, who have had longer Experience of the World, than upon *your own*. Consult with those that are *wise* and *good*, ask them what they would do, if they were in your Case; and you will find that in
Multi-

Multitude of Counsellors there is Safety, and that oftentimes *proves best* which was *least your own doing*: or if it should not prove well, it will be a Satisfaction to you that you did not do it *without Advice*, and mature Deliberation; and as the thing appear'd then, you did *for the best*.

What *brighter* Character can be given of a young Man, than to say he is *wise*? Or what *black*er, than to say he is *wilful*? See the former in *Solomon*, who calls himself a *Child*, that *knows not how to go out or to come in*, 1 Kings 3. 7. and yet his Father calls him a *wise Man*, that knows what he has to do. See the latter in the Character of the rebellious Son that was to be *stoned to Death*, against whom the Indictment runs thus; He is *stubborn*; he *will not obey the Voice of his Father and Mother*, Deut. 21. 18, 20. Those are the *Fools* whom there is little Hopes of, that *despise Wisdom and Instruction*, Prov. 1. 7. He that *will not be counselled, cannot be helped*.

But, would you be wise? Not only be thought so, but really be so: Study the Scriptures; by them you will get more Understanding *than the Ancients*, than *all your Teachers*, Psal. 119. 99, 100. Make your Observations upon the Carriage and Miscarriage of others, that you may *take Pattern* by those that *do well*, and *take Warning* by those that *do ill*, may look upon both, and *receive Instruction*. But especially be earnest with God in Prayer for Wisdom, as *Solomon* was, and the Prayer was both *pleasing* and *prevailing* in Heaven. *If any Man*, if any young Man *lack Wisdom*, and is sensible that he *lacks* it, he is directed what to do, his way is plain, let him *ask it of God*; and he is encouraged to do it, for *the Lord giveth Wisdom*, he has it to give, Prov. 2. 6. He delights to give it, he *gives liberally*; he has a particular Eye to young People in the dispensing of this Gift, for his Word was written to *give to the young Man Knowledge and Discretion*, Prov. 1. 4. And because some that are willing to be *counselling*, yet do not care to be *chidden*,

press'd upon Young People. 27

We are told that he gives, and *upbraids* not; yet as if this were not Encouragement enough to the Beggars at Wisdom's Gates, there is an exprefs Promise to every one that seeks *aright*, that he shall not seek *in vain*; 'tis not Promise with a Peradventure, but with the greatest Assurance, *it shall be given him*, Jam. i. 5. To all true believers, *Christ* himself is and shall be *made of God Wisdom*, i Cor. i. 30.

Thirdly, You must be *humble* and *modest*, and not *proud* and *conceited*. The Word signifies *Modestè se gerere*, *σωφροσύνην ἐκαλεστέτω ταπεινοφροσύνην*. So *Chrysostom*, *Hom ad. Rom.* *Sober-mindedness* is the same with *Lowly-mindedness*. And *Theodore*t makes it the same with that *Poverty of Spirit*, on which *Christ* pronounceth his *first Blessing*, Mat. 5. 3. 'Tis recommended to the *younger* to be *clothed with Humility*, Pet. 5. 5. that's being *sober-minded*.

It is an Observation I have made upon that little Acquaintance I have had with the World; that I have seen *more Young People ruin'd by Pride*, than perhaps by any one Lust whatsoever;

and therefore let me press this upon you with all Earnestness : And it is a Caution introduc'd with more than ordinary Solemnity, *Rom. 12. 3. I say, thro' the Grace given unto me, unto every Man that is among you ;* and what is the Word that is thus declar'd to be of Divine Original and universal Concern ? It is this, that *no Man think of himself above what he ought to think, but think soberly* : And there is an elegant *Paronomasia* in the Original, which for the Sake of the young Scholars, I beg leave to take notice of, *μη' ὑπερφρονῆς, παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν, ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς σωφρονεῖν* ; let him think *unto Sobriety*, the Word used in the Text ; let him think himself into a sober Mind, and always keep in that good Mind.

Keep up low Thoughts of yourselves, of your Endowments, both outward and inward, of your Attainments and Improvements, and all your Performances, and all the Things you call Merits and Excellencies. *Boast not of a false Gift*, of what you have not, nor be puffed up with what you have. What there is in you that is commendable

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commendable, wink at it your selves, as most People do at their own Faults, and diminish it, and look much at that in others which is *more* commendable. Let not the *Handsome* glory in their *Beauty*, nor the *Ingenious* in their *Wit*; for there cannot be a greater Allay to the Glory, than to have it said, such and such are *comely* and *witty*, but *they* know it. Doth your *Face* in any respect shine? Be as *Moses* was, He *wist* not that the *Skin of his Face* shone; and do what *Moses* did as soon as he perceiv'd it, *put a Vail* upon it. Delight more to say and do what is praiseworthy, than to be prais'd for it; for *what hast thou which thou hast not received?* And what hast thou received which thou hast not abused? And *why then dost thou boast?*

Keep up a *quick* and *constant* Sense of your own manifold Defects and Infirmities; how much there is *in you*, and how much is said and done *by you* every Day, which you have reason to be ashamed of, and humbled for; in how many Things you come short of others, and in how many more you

come short of the Rule; you will find no reason to be proud of what you *know*, when you see how much you are *ignorant of*, nor of what you do that's *good*, when you see how much you *do amiss*. Dwell much upon *humbling* Considerations, and those that tend to *take down* your high Opinions of your selves; and keep up a humble Sense of your necessary and constant Dependance upon Christ and his Grace, without which you *are nothing*, and will soon be *worse than nothing*.

Think not your selves too wise, too good, too old to be *reprov'd* for what is amiss, and to be *taught* to do better. When you are double and treble the Age you are, yet you will not be *too old to learn*, and increase in Learning. If any Man think that he *knows any thing*, that he *knows every thing*, so as that he needs no more Instruction, he *knows nothing yet as he ought to know it*, 1 Cor. 8. 2. And therefore he that *seems to be wise*, seems so to himself, seems so to others, *let him become a Fool, that he may be Wise*; let him be sensible of his own Folly, that he may

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be quickened to use the *means of Wisdom*, and prepared to receive the *Grace of Wisdom*, 1 Cor. 3. 18.

Be not confident of your own Judgment, nor Opinionative, nor look upon those with Contempt that do not think as you do. *Elibu* is a great Example of Humility and Modesty to those of your Age; he was *swift to hear*, and very ambitious to learn, for it is the learning Age; *I am young and you are old*, and therefore *I waited for your Words, I gave ear to your Reasons, I attended unto you*, ready to give what you said its due weight, and expecting to hear something that I had not known before; but he was *slow to speak, I was afraid, and durst not shew you my Opinion, for I said, Days should speak*, Job 32. 6, 7, 11, 12. Be not forward to say *I hold* so and so, for (as a Grave Divine once told a Novice, that was laying down the Law with great Assurance) it best becomes you to *hold your peace*.

Take heed of thinking yourselves *above your Business*; you that are Apprentices, think not your selves above

your Service ; Humility will make the Yoke you are under, easy to you, which will gall the *proud* and *stiff* Neck. You that are set up for your selves, think it no Disparagement to you to *confine* your selves to your Business, and to make a Business of it ; to see to it with your own Eyes, no nor to put your own Hands to it. Be ashamed of nothing but Sin. "Εργον ἐδὲν οὐκ εἶδ'.

'Twill be yet much worse, if you think your selves *above your Religion* ; above the *Restraints* of it, as if it were a thing *below you* to be afraid of Sin, and to *make Conscience* of your Words and Actions ; whereas there cannot be a greater Disgrace to you than loose Walking. Nor above the *Exercises* of Religion, as if it were a thing below you to pray, and hear the Word, and join in Acts of Devotion, for it is really the greatest Honour you can do your selves thus to honour God.

Let this Branch of *Sober-mindedness* appear in your Looks and Carriage ; let the *shew of your Countenances* witness for you, that you are not confident
and

and *conceited*, but that you keep up a due *Diffidence* of your selves, and a due *Deference* to all *about you*, especially those *above you*. Be not pert in your Carriage, nor fantastical in your Dress; if there be any thing in the Garb and Carriage, young People may be innocently *proud* of, because those about them will be justly pleased with it, 'tis the Gravity of it, when it is an Indication of Humility and Modesty reigning in the Heart; for those are the best Ornaments, and *in the sight of God*, and all wise Men, *of great Price*. And you will find, that *better it is to be of a humble Spirit with the lowly, than to divide the Spoil with the proud*; for when *Mens Pride shall bring them low, Honour shall uphold the humble in Spirit*; and they shall be upheld, born up, and born out, in that Honour.

Fourthly, You must be *temperate* and *self-denying*, and not *indulgent of your Appetites*. 'Tis the same Word in the Text, that *v. 2.* is translated *Temperate*, and is one of the Lessons that the *aged Men* must learn; and some think it properly signifies a *moderate*

use of Meat and Drink ; so as to keep the mean, and in the use of them, *σβειν τὴν φρήνιν*, or *τὴν φρόνησιν*, to *save* our *Mind* from being clouded, and our *Wisdom* from being corrupted ; that is, our Hearts from being *over-charged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness*: we commonly put a *sober Man*, in opposition to one that's drunk, or addicted to Drunkenness. Let me therefore warn young Men to dread the Sin of *Drunkenness*, keep at a distance from it, avoid all Appearances of it, and Approaches towards it. It has *slain its Thousands*, its *Ten Thousands* of young People ; has ruin'd their Health, brought Diseases upon them, and cut them off in the Flower of their Days ; how many fall *unpitied Sacrifices* to this *base Lust* ! It has ruin'd their Estates and Trades, at their first setting out ; when the Time that should have been spent in the Shop and Ware-house, is spent in the Tavern and Ale-house ; when the Money they should buy Goods with, and pay their Debts with, is thrown away in the Gratification of an inordinate Love of Wine and strong Drink,

no wonder if they soon break and run their Country.

Take heed of the *Beginnings* of this Sin, for the way of it is *Down-hill*; and many under pretence of an innocent Entertainment, and passing the Evening in a pleasant Conversation, are drawn in to *drink to excess*, and make Beasts of themselves: And you should tremble to think how fatal the Consequences of it are; how unfit it renders you for the Service of God at Night, yea, and for your own Business the next Morning; how many are thus besotted, and sunk into that *Drowsiness*, which *cloaths a Man with Rags*: And yet that's not the worst, it extinguishes Convictions, and Sparks of Devotion, and provokes the Spirit of Grace to withdraw, and it will be the Sinner's Eternal Ruin, if it be not repented of, and forsaken in time; for the Word of God hath said it, and it shall not be *unsaid*; it cannot be *gain-said*, That *Drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*.

Look not then upon the Wine when it is red, when it gives its Colour in
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the Cup, is charming, is tempting ; be not overcome by its Allurements, for *at the last it bites like a Serpent, and stings like an Adder*. If you saw the Devil putting the Cup of Drunkenness into *your Hand*, I dare say, you would not take it out of *his* ; you may be sure the Temptation to it comes *from him*, and therefore ought to dread it as much as if you saw it. If you saw Poison put into the Glass, you would not drink it ; and if it be *provoking* to God, and *ruining* to your Souls, 'tis worse than Poison : There's worse than Death, there's Hell in the Cup, and will you not then refuse it ?

How many ways may you spend your Evening, when you are fatigu'd with the Business of the Day, better than in *drinking*, in immoderate drinking ? I am sorry we cannot urge against you, so much as gladly we would, the *Scandal* of it, 'tis grown so *fashionable*. But whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, we will insist upon the *Sin* of it, and its Prejudice to the Soul both here and for ever, and beg of you in consideration
of

of this, to *frighten* yourselves from it. We will insist likewise upon the real Disgrace that it is to a *reasonable Creature*, who is hereby spoil'd of his Crown, and levell'd with the Brutes; and beg of you in consideration of this, to *shame* yourselves out of it before God and your own Conscience.

It is a Sin that is in a special manner *shameful* and *hurtful* to those who profess Religion. You that have been well educated, that have been bred up in sober Families, have had Examples of Sobriety set you, and have known what the Honours and Pleasures of a sober Conversation are; if when you set up for yourselves, you think yourselves happy in getting clear from the Restraints of a sober *Regimen*, and take the liberty of the Drunkards, what a Reproach will it be to you! what a Degeneracy! what a Fall from your first Love! and where will it stop? Perhaps you have given up your Names to the Lord Jesus at his Table, and dare you *partake of the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of Devils*? Let Christians that are made to our God
Kings

Kings and Priests, take to themselves the Lesson which *Solomon's Mother* taught him, *It is not for Kings, O Lemuel, it is not for Kings.* So it is not for Christians to drink *Wine*, but with great Moderation, lest they drink and forget the Law, forget the Gospel, *Prov. 31. 4, 5.*

Yet this is not all I have to warn you against under this Head: Let not young People be *nice* and *curious* in their *Diets*, nor solicitous to have all the *Delights of Sense* wound up to the height of *Pleasurableness*; be not *desirous of Dainties*, for they are *deceitful Meat*, *Prov. 23. 3.* 'Tis true, the Use of them is *lawful*, but it is as true, that the Love of them is *dangerous*; and the indulging of the Appetites of the Body to them is oft prejudicial to the Soul, and its true Interests. Learn betimes to relish the Delights that are rational and spiritual, and then your Mouths will be out of taste to those Pleasures that are *brutal*, and belong only to the *animal* Life; and be afraid, lest by indulging the Body and the Lusts of it, you come
by

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by degrees to the black Character of those that were φιλήδοναι μᾶλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι, *Lovers of Pleasure more than Lovers of God*, 2 Tim. 3. 4.

The *Body* is made to be a *Servant* to the *Soul*, and it must be treated accordingly ; we must *give* it, as we must to our Servants, *that which is just and equal*, let it have what is fitting ; but let it not be suffer'd to *domineer*, for nothing so insufferable as a *Servant when he reigneth*, Prov. 30. 22. nor let it be *pamper'd*, for he that *delicately bringeth up his Servant from a Child*, shall have him become his *Son at the length*, Prov. 29. 21. Be dead, therefore, to the *Delights of Sense* ; *mortify* the Love of *Ease* and *Pleasure* ; learn betimes to *endure Hardness* ; use yourselves to *deny yourselves*, and so you will make it *easy* to yourselves, and will the better bear the *common Calamities* of human Life, as well as *Sufferings for Righteousness-sake*. Those that would approve themselves *good Soldiers of Jesus Christ*, must *endure Hardness*, must inure themselves to it, 2 Tim. 2. 3.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, You must be *mild and gentle*, and *not indulgent of your Passions*. The word here used, signifies *Moderation*, such a *Soundness of Mind* as is opposed to Frenzy and Violence. We have need of Sobriety to restrain and repress not only our *inordinate Appetites* towards those things that are pleasing to Sense, but our *irregular Resentment* of those things that are *displeasing*; for such a vexatious Knowledge of *Good and Evil* has Mankind got by eating of the forbidden Tree.

Young People are especially apt to be *hot and furious*, to resent Injuries, and to study Revenge, like *Simeon and Levi*, whose *Anger* was *curst*, for it was *fierce*, and their *Wrath*, for it was *cruel*; and therefore the Passion is *ungovern'd*, because the Pride is *unmortified*. They are fond of Liberty, and therefore cannot bear *Controul*, and wedded to their own Opinion, and therefore cannot bear *Contradiction*, but are all in a flame presently, if any one cross them; and reckon that an *Honour* which is really their Shame, to lay the Reins in the Neck of their Passions, not caring what *Indecen-*

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ies they are transported into by them, nor considering how mischievous the *Consequences* may be.

Learn betimes to *bridle* your Anger; to guard against the Sparks of Provocation, that they may not fall into the Tinder: or if the Fire be kindled, put it out presently, by *commanding the Peace* in your own Souls, and *setting a Watch before the Door of your Lips*. And when at any time you are affronted, or think yourselves so, aim not at the *Wit* of a sharp Answer, which will *stir up Anger*, but at the *Wisdom* and *Grace* of a *soft Answer*, which will *turn away Wrath*, Prov. 15. 1.

You are *setting out* in the World, and would have your Passage thro' it *comfortable*. Now there is nothing will contribute more to that than a *quiet Spirit*: *The Meek shall inherit the Earth*, was God's Promise by *David* first, *Psal.* 37. 11. and afterwards by the Son of *David*, *Mat.* 5. 5. and that if they possess not an abundance of Wealth, yet they shall *delight themselves in the abundance of Peace*. By the good Government of your Passions, you will make *yourselves*

selves easy, and easy to those *about you*; and a great deal of Mischief both to others and to yourselves will be prevented.

The Moral Philosophers valued themselves very much upon the Power which their Instructions had upon young People, to *soften* and *sweeten* their Temper, and teach them to *govern their Passions*, and keep a strict Hand upon them. And shall Christianity, which to all the Arguments which Reason suggests for *Meekness*, adds the Authority of the God that made us, forbidding rash Anger, as Heart-murder; the Example of the Lord Jesus Christ that bought us, and bid us learn of him to be *meek and lowly in Heart*; and the Consolations of the Spirit, which have a direct Tendency to make us pleasant to ourselves and others; and our Experience of God's Mercy and Grace, in forbearing and forgiving us: Shall this Divine and Heavenly Institution come short of their Instructions, in plucking up this Root of Bitterness which bears Gall and Wormwood, and making us *peaceable, gentle and easy*
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to be entreated, which are the bright and blessed Characters of the *Wisdom from above*, Jam. 3. 17.

If you suffer your Passions to *get head* now you are young, they will be in danger of growing more and more *headstrong*, and of making you perpetually uneasy ; but if you get Dominion over them now, you will easily keep Dominion, and so keep the Peace in your Hearts and Houses, and through the Grace of God, it will not be in the power even of Sickness or Old Age to make you *peevish*, to *sour* your Temper, or *embitter* your Spirits. Put on therefore among the Ornaments of your Youth, *as the Elect of God, Holy and Beloved, Bowels of Mercies, Kindness, Humbleness of Mind, Meekness and Long-suffering*. Your Age is made for Love ; let holy Love therefore be a Law to you.

Sixthly, You must be *chaste and reserv'd*, and *not wanton and impure*. Both the Greek Fathers and Philosophers use the Word *σωφροσύνη*, for Chastity ; *Continentiam & castitatem significat*, Isidore Pelus. And when it

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is here made the particular Duty of young Men, this Signification of the Word must certainly be taken in ; for the *Lusts of the Flesh* which are manifest, *Adultery, Fornication, Unclean-ness, and Lasciviousness*, Gal. 5. 19. are particularly call'd *youthful Lusts*.

And against those, in Christ's Name, I am here to warn all you that are young! for God's sake, and for your own precious Soul's sake, flee these *youthful Lusts* ; dread them as you would a devouring Fire, or a destroying Plague, and keep at a distance from them : *Abstain from all Appearances of these Sins ; hating even the Garment spotted with the Flesh*, even the Attire of an Harlot. Covet not to know these *Depths of Satan*, but take a pride in being ignorant of the *Way of the adulterous Woman*. See all Temptations to Uncleaness coming from the *unclean Spirit*, that roaring Lion who goes about continually, thus seeking to devour young People. O that you would betimes conceive a Detestation and Abhorrence of this Sin, as much below you, and more against you ;

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you ; and put on a firm and steady Resolution in the Strength of the Grace of Jesus Christ never to *defile your selves* with it ; remembering what the Apostle prescribes, as that which ought to be the constant *Care of the unmarried*, to be *holy both in Body and Spirit*, and so to please the Lord, 1 Cor. 7. 34.

Take heed of the Beginnings of this Sin, lest Satan in any thing get advantage against you, and the little Thief, stolen in insensibly at the Window, open the Door to the great one. How earnestly doth Solomon warn his young Man to take heed of the Baits, lest he be taken in the Snares of the evil Woman ! Remove thy Way far from her, saith he, for he that would be kept from harm, must keep out of harm's way ; Come not nigh the Door of her House, but go on the other side of the Street, as thou wouldst if it were a House infected ; Lest thou mourn at the last, when thy Flesh and thy Body are consum'd, and say, How have I hated Instruction, and my Heart despised Reproof ? Prov. 5. 8, 11, 12.

Pray

Pray earnestly to God for his Grace to keep you from this Sin, and that it may be *sufficient* for you; so as that be the Temptation never so *sudden*, it may find you *awake*, and aware of it, that you may not be *surpris'd* into it; and be it never so *strong*, it may find you *arm'd* against it, with the whole Armour of God, that you may not be *overpower'd*, and *overcome* by it.

Get your Hearts *purified* by the Word of God, and sanctified by Divine Love, for how else shall young People *cleanse their Way*, but by *taking heed thereto, according to the Word*? Keep up the Authority of Conscience, and keep it always tender, and *void of Offence*. Make a *Covenant with your Eyes*, that they may not be the Inlets of any impure Thoughts, or the Outlets of any impure Desires; and pray *David's* Prayer, *Turn away mine Eyes from beholding Vanity*, that you may never *Look and Lust*.

Modesty is the Hedge of *Chastity*, and it is the *Ornament* of your Age, therefore be sure to keep that up. Let your Dress and Carriage be very *modest*,

lest, and such as speaks a *chaste Conversation coupled with Fear*. Make it to appear, that you know how to be *pleasant and chearful*, without transgressing even the strictest Rules of Modesty; say, that you *know not how to be so*, when any thing is said or done against those Rules.

I would especially charge you that ye Young, to take heed that *no corrupt filthy Communication proceed out of your Mouth*. Never dare to speak, nor delight to hear any thing that is immodest; *Fornication and all Uncleanness, let it not be once named among you*; 'tis foolish Talking and Jesting which is not convenient, which is very *unbecoming* the Professors of such a *pure and undefiled Religion* as Christianity is. 'Tis that *evil Communication* which corrupts *good Manners*; 'tis, as some think, that *idle Word* for which our Saviour with we must *give Account in the great Day*. Think what a great Dishonour lascivious Talk is to God, what Reproach to yourselves, and what mischief it doth to those you converse with;

with ; *how great a Matter* a Spark of this Fire from Hell may kindle ; and how much of the Sin and Ruin of Souls you may hereby have to answer for. God *turns* those to a *pure Language* whom he brings to *call upon his Name*. Zeph. 3. 9.

Seventhly, You must be *staid and compos'd*, and not *giddy and unsettled*. This we commonly take to be signified by a *sober Mind*, a Mind that acts and moves steadily, and is *one with it self* in opposition to a roving wandering Heart, a *Heart divided*, which cannot but be *found faulty*. Be *sober-minded* that is, let your Hearts be *fixed*, Psal. 108. 1. *Stablish your Hearts*, and be not like *Reuben, unstable as Water* for those that are so, will *never excel*.

Fix now in the Days of your Youth for God and Christ, and serious Godliness ; fix for Heaven as your End, and Holiness as your Way. Halt no longer hover no longer between two, but be at a point ; you have often been bound to *chuse whom you will serve*, stand no longer deliberating, but bring the

Matter at length to the Issue you will abide by, and abide by it, *nay, but we will serve the Lord.*

Fix to that, whatever it is, that you are design'd for in the World; fix to your Business, fix to your Book, if that is to be your Business. *Dum quid sis dubitas, jam potes esse nihil.* Whatever it is that you are employ'd in, let your Application to it be close and constant, and do not, upon every slight and trivial pretence, start aside from it, and say you are weary of it, or you hope to mend your selves, when the same volatile Humour that makes you uneasy in the Place and Work you *are in*, will soon make you *so in another.*

Learn to fix *your Thoughts*, and be not *wandering*; let them not run from one thing to another; as the Bird *in wandering*, and the *Swallow in flying*, or thus they run at length with the *Fool's Eyes into the Ends of the Earth*; but *what thy Hand finds to do*, and lay thy Heart to think of, which is to the purpose, do it, and think it *with all thy might*, and pursue it close, till
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thou bring it to an Issue, and then it is done and thought to *Purpose* indeed; what thou dost, *Hoc age*, mind thy Business.

Learn to fix *your Aims*, and act with a *single Eye*; for the *double minded* Man, who is far from being *sober-minded*, cannot but be *unstable in all his Ways*, and turns himself as the Wind turns, and *he that wavers is as a Wave of the Sea*, *Jam. 1. 6, 8.* Act considerately, that is *consistently* with your selves, and as those that *understand your own Way*; and have not your Ear open to every Whisper and Suggestion that would turn you out of it. *Be no more Children tossed to and fro with every Wind*, ticed to and fro with every Bait, *Eph. 4. 14.* But in Understanding *be ye Men*, be ye fixed; let your Foot *stand in an even Place*, and then let your Hearts be established, be not *mov'd*, be not *remov'd*.

Eighthly, You must be *Content* and *Easy*, and not *Ambitious* and *Aspiring*. Some make the Word to signify *Animi demissio*, the bringing of the *Mind down to the Condition*, when the

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the *Condition* will not in every thing be brought up to the *Mind*. A *sober Mind* is that which *accommodates* it self to every Estate of Life and every Event of Providence, so that whatever Changes happen, it preserves the Possession and Enjoyment of it self.

You that are *Young* must learn sometimes to *reconcile* your selves to your *Lot*, and *make the best of that which is*, because it is the Will of God it should be as it is, and what *pleaseth him* ought to please us; for he knows what's fit to be *done*, and fit for us to *have*, better than we do. Let this check all disquieting discontented Thoughts. *Should it be according to thy Mind?* Shalt thou who art but of *Yesterday* controul him, quarrel with him or prescribe to him, whose *Counsels* were of *old from Everlasting?* 'Tis Folly to direct the divine Disposals, but Wisdom to *acquiesce* in them.

He who *determineth* the *Times before appointed*, and the *Bounds of Men's Habitation*, order'd what our Rank and Station should be in the World, what Parents we should be

born of, what Lot we should be *born to*, and what our *Make* and *Capacity* of Mind and Body should be : And in these respects there is a great Variety ordain'd by Providence between some and others, who yet are *made of one Blood*; some are born to Wealth and Honour, others to Poverty and Obscurity; some seem *made* and *mark'd* by Nature (that is, the God of Nature) to be *great* and *considerable*, while others seem doom'd to be all their Days *little* and *low*. You see many *above you* that make a Figure in the World, and are likely to do so yet more, while you are but as *Cyphers*; yet do not envy them, nor fret at the place God's Providence has put you in, but *make your selves easy* in it, and make the best of it, as those who are satisfied not only in general that *all is well that God doth*, but in particular all is well that he doth *with you*.

Possess your Minds now you are Young with a *Reverence* for the Divine *Providence*, its Sovereignty, Wisdom and Goodness, and bring your Minds unto a chearful *Reference* of your selves

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to all its *Arbitrations* : *Here I am,*
let the Lord do with me and all mine
Affairs *as seemeth good in his sight.*
This would have a mighty Influence
upon the Conduct of your Affairs, and
the Evenness of your Spirits, all your
Days. Whatever you are *dispossess'd*
of, or *disturb'd* in the Enjoyment of,
resolve to be *easy*, not because you
cannot help it, This is an Evil, and
I must bear it ; that's but a poor Reason :
but because it is the Will of
God, whose Will is his Wisdom ;
This is an Evil, but it is design'd for
my Good, *and I will bear it.*

Lay your Expectations low from
this World, and promise not your
selves *great Matters* in it. 'Tis God's
Command, *Rom. 12. 16. Mind not*
high Things ; set not your Eyes and
Hearts upon them as if they were the
best Things, and as if they would make
you happy, and you could not be hap-
py without them ; but *condescend to*
them of low Estate, and take as much
Pleasure in Converse with them, as if
you were Company for Princes and
Peers ; or, as the *Margin* reads it, *be*

content with mean Things, with a mean Habitation, mean Diet, mean Clothes, mean Employments, if such be your Lot; and instead of *blaming* it, *bles*s God for it that it is not worse, and believe 'tis fittest for you.

Not that I would have Young People *mean spirited*, or cramp'd in their Aims and Endeavours; whatever your *Business* is, strive to be *excellent* and *eminent* in it; whatever your *Substance* is, be diligent, that by the Blessing of God upon it, it may like *Job's* be *increased in the Land*. *A good Man leaves an Inheritance* honestly got to *his Children's Children*. But I would not have you ambitious of *great Things*; covet not by *taking Thought* to add *Cubits to your Stature*; let it suffice to thrive by Inches with the Increases of the *Sober-minded*, that do not *make haste to be rich*, for *soft and fair goes far*.

We commonly say of you that are Young, that you are *upon your Preferment*; shall I persuade you to reckon it your *best Preferment* to be eminently *pious*, and serviceable to the
Glory

press'd upon Young People. 55

Glory of God and the Interests of his Kingdom in the World? That's the way to have the *best Reputation* among Men, which wise Men reckon no despicable Preferment, for a *good Name is better than precious Ointment*. Aim at advancing your selves, not that you may live in so much the more Pomp and Ease, but that you may be in so much the better Capacity to *do good*, and that's true Preferment.

We commonly say of you that are Young, that now is your Time to *make your Fortune*; 'tis a *Heathenish* Expression, for it is not *blind* Fortune, but an *All-seeing Providence* that we are govern'd by. But that is not all; 'tis not in your power to make your own Lot, *Every Man's Judgment proceedeth from the Lord*; every Creature is that to you, and no more, than he makes it to be, and therefore you must *seek his Favour*, and reckon your Lot best made when you have *the Lord to be the Portion of your Inheritance, and your Cup*; and then say, *The Lines are fallen to you in pleasant*

pleasant Places. That's *best* for you which is *best* for your Souls, and in that you must soberly rest satisfy'd.

Jacob was setting out in the World, and going to *take him a Wife*, when all he desir'd and aim'd at, and if I may so say, *intended* for in his Marriage-Articles, was *Bread to eat*, and *Raiment to put on*, to be kept in his *Way*, and brought at length to his *Father's House in Peace* : and why should any of the spiritual Seed of *Jacob* look *higher* in this World, who knows and hopes he has Eternal Riches in Reversion after *one* Life? Let Young People be modest and moderate and *sober-minded* in their Desires and Expectations of temporal good Things, as becomes those who see through them, and look above, and beyond them, to the *Things not seen*, that are *Eternal*.

Ninthly, You must be *grave and serious*, and not *frothy and vain*. This Signification we commonly give to the Word here used. Him that's *serious* we call a *sober Man*. And I put this last of the Ingredients of this *Sober-*

press'd upon Young People. 57

Sober-mindedness, because it will have a very great Influence upon all the rest. We should *gain our Point* intirely with Young People, if we could but prevail with them to be *serious*. 'Tis *serious* Piety we would bring them to, and to live *in good earnest*.

Not that we would oblige Young People never to be *merry*, or had any *ill-natur'd* Design upon them to make them *melancholy*; no, Religion *allows* them to be *cheerful*. It is your Time, make your best of it; *evil Days* will come, of which you will say you *have no Pleasure in them*, when the Cares and Sorrows of this World increase upon you; and we would not have you to *anticipate* those *evil Days*. It is mention'd as an Instance of the promised Prosperity and flourishing State of *Jerusalem*, that *the Streets of the City shall be full of Boys and Girls playing in the Streets thereof*, Zech. 8. 5. Nay, Religion *prescribes* *Cheerfulness* to all those that are sincere and hearty in it; *Go thy Way, eat thy Bread with Joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry Heart*, for God now ac-

cepteth thy Works, Eccl. 9. 7. God expects to be *serv'd* by us with *Joyfulness and Gladness of Heart*, in the *abundance of all Things*, Deut. 28. 47.

And it is certain, that none have such good reason to be chearful as godly People have ; none can be so upon *better Grounds* or with a *better Grace*, so *justly* or so *safely*. I have often said, and I must take all occasions to repeat it, that *a holy heavenly Life, spent in the Service of God, and in Communion with him*, is without doubt the most *pleasant comfortable Life* any one can live in this World.

But that which I would caution you against under this Head, is *vain* and *carnal Mirth*, that *Mirth*, that *Laughter of the Fool*, of which Solomon saith, *it is mad*, and *what doth it* ? Innocent Mirth is of good use in its Time and Place, it will revive the Spirit, and fit you for Business ; *a merry Heart doth good like a Medicine* ; but then it must be used like a Medicine, must be taken *Physically*, only when there is occasion for it, and not *constantly*
like

like our daily Bread ; and like Physick it must be taken *sub regimine*, as not too often, so not too much at a time, like *Opiates*, which are taken *by drops*, and with great Caution : when you make use of this *Medicine*, it must be with due *Correctives*, and you must take great Care of your selves, lest that turn to your Prejudice, and become a *Snare* and a *Trap*, which was intended for your Health and Welfare.

Allow your selves in *Mirth*, as far as will consist with *Sober-mindedness*, and no further ; be *merry* and *wise* ; never let your Mirth transgress the Laws of Piety, Charity, or Modesty, nor *intrench* upon your Time for Devotion and the Service of God. Wise Men will always reckon him overfond of his Mirth, that will rather *lose his Friend* than *his Jest* ; much more may he be reckon'd so, that will rather lose his God and a *good Conscience*. Never *make sport* with the Scripture and *Sacred Things*, but let that which is *serious* always be spoken of with Seriousness ; for it's ill *jesting* with *Edge-tools*.
Take

Take heed lest your Mirth exceed *due Bounds*, and transport you into any *Indecencies*; that you give not your selves too great a Liberty, and then think to excuse it by saying, *Am not I in sport?* Prov. 26. 19. Set a double Guard at such a time before the Door of your Lips, lest you *offend with your Tongues*; and especially *keep your Hearts with all Diligence*. Let the *inward Thought* still be *serious*; and in the midst of your greatest Mirth, retain a Disposition *habitually* serious, and a reigning Affection to spiritual and divine things; such as will make you *indifferent* to all vain Mirth and Pleasure, and set you *above it*, and enable you to look upon that with a holy *Contempt*, which so many spend so much of their time in with so great a *Complacency*. A serious Christian, tho' to *relax* himself, and *entertain* his Friends, he may allow himself a little in Mirth and Recreation, yet he will make it to appear he is not in that as *in his Element*, but he knows *better Pleasures*, and has given them the Preference. A believing Foretaste
of

of the Milk and Honey of *Canaan* is enough to put the Mouth quite out of taste to the Garlick and Onions of *Egypt*.

But while I am pressing you that are young to be *always serious*, habitually so, always well affected to serious Work, what shall we think of those that are *never serious*; that are always on the merry Pin, always *jesting*, always *bantering*, so that you never know when they speak *in earnest*; that are always in pursuit of some sensual Pleasure or other, and never know what it is to be one quarter of an hour serious, from the Beginning of the Year to the End of it? Certainly they forget that *for all these things God shall bring them into Judgment*, and they know not how soon. O that this *Laughter* might be turn'd *into the Mourning* of true Penitents, and *this Joy into the Heaviness* of sincere Converts; that it may not be turn'd, as otherwise it certainly will be, into the *weeping and wailing* of damned Sinners. The same Jesus that said, *Blessed are they that mourn,*
for

for they shall be comforted, hath said also, *Wo unto you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep*, Luke 6. 26.

Shall I now prevail with you that are *young*, to value *Wisdom* above *Wit*, and that which helps to make you *serious* above that which helps to make you *merry*; and to take as much pleasure in *Gravity*, as others do in *Vanity*. It will be the *Honour* of your Youth, will *arm* you against the Temptations you are *surrounded with*, and will not only *mark* you for something *considerable* in this World, but for something infinitely *more so* in the other World. And if you understand your selves right, I dare say, one Hour spent in the Employments and Enjoyments of a *sober, serious Mind*, will afford you more true Comfort in the Reflection, than many spent in Mirth and Gaiety, because it will certainly pass so much better in the Account another Day.

If you take the World for your Guide, you will be bid to *laugh and be fat*; will be told that an *Ounce of Mirth is worth a Pound of Sorrow*; but

press'd upon Young People. 63

but if you will attend to the Dictates of the Word of God, (and it is fit the Word that must *judge us* hereafter should *rule us* now) that will tell you, that *Sorrow is better than Laughter*; and that 'tis *better to go to the House of Mourning* than to the *House of Feasting*: for *by the sadness of the Countenance the Heart is made better*, 'tis made *serious*.

And thus you see what it is to be *sober-minded*, and how much of your Duty it takes in; but are you *content* it should take in all this? Can you say, that tho' in many things you *come short*, yet you *esteem all these Precepts*, and all the things contained in them *to be right*, and therefore *hate every false way*? You will then be very willing to have this *Sober-mindedness* further press'd upon you.

For the second thing then, Let us see what *Considerations* are *proper*, and may be *powerful* to make young People in all these Respects *sober-minded*; and will you that are young, apply your Minds a little to these things?

First,

First, You are all *reasonable Creatures*, and therefore ought to be *sober-minded*. Consider how *noble* and *excellent* that Rank of Beings is that you are of ; how far advanced above that of the Beasts, and consequently how unjust you are both to God and to your selves, if by Incogitancy, Inconsideration, or the Indulgence of any brutish Appetite or Passion, you *level your selves with the Beasts that perish*.

What have you your *Reason* for, if you do not make use of it? Your *Mind*, if you do not take care to keep your selves of a *sound Mind* ; or if you *mind* not that for the sake of which you had your *Minds* given you. *Shew your selves Men* therefore by *bringing to mind*, O ye Transgressors, Isa. 46. 8. Sinners would become Saints, if they would but *shew themselves Men* ; for the Service of Christ is a *reasonable* Service, and those that are *wicked* are *unreasonable* Men : Be persuaded therefore to *act rationally*, and to save the nobler Powers of Reason from being *ty'd up* and *over-power'd* by this and the other rebellious Lust and Passion.

You

press'd upon Young People. 65

You brought *rational Souls* with you into the World; but think how long the *Seeds of Reason* lay bury'd under the Clods, before they began to *spring up*; how long those *Sparks* of a divine Fire seem'd lost in the Embers, during the Years of Infancy, when you were not capable of the *Consideration* we are persuading you to. Yet then God took care of you, *provided* for you, and *did you good*, when you were not able to do him any Service: Study therefore, now you are come to the Use of Reason, *what Honours, and what Dignities shall be done to him*, who was then *careful for you with all that Care*. Study how you shall redeem the Time that was then *unavoidably* lost, by making so much the more *use of your Reason* now.

Think likewise how much time *runs waste in sleep*, how many hours pass every Day, during which the Operations of Reason are *suspended*, and Fancy is all that while *busy at work* in a thousand foolish Dreams; yet then God *preserves us*, and gives his *Angels a Charge over us*. Let us therefore
when

when we are *awake* set Reason on work, find it Employment, and support its Authority by *Sober-mindedness*; and let not the *Conversation of the Day* be as idle and impertinent as the *Dreams of the Night* are, as I fear with many it is, both young and old.

Think likewise how *piteous* the Case of those is that are *depriv'd* of the Use of their *Reason*, that were born Idiots, or are fallen into deep Melancholy, or into Distraction and Frenzy; that are *unable* of thinking, speaking, and acting rationally, and are put out of the Possession, Government, and Enjoyment of themselves. This might have been *your Case*; it is God's great Mercy to you that *it is not so*; nor can you be secure, but that some time or other *it may be so*; you would *dread* it as the *greatest Affliction*, not to be *able to use* your Reason, and will you not dread as a *great Sin*, not to *use it well*, and as it should be used, now you are *able*.

When St. Paul would prove to the *most noble* Festus, that he was not *beside himself*, that he was not *mad*, his

Plea

press'd upon Young People. 67

Plea is, *I speak the Words of Truth and Soberness*; as if those that do not *speak the Words of Truth and Soberness*, all whose Talk is Banter and Vanity, were no better than *mad*, and *beside themselves*. O that such young People as are thus taken in the *Snare* of *carnal Mirth*, and are in effect made *delirious* by it, as you may perceive by the Rambles of their Talk, would at length *recover their Senses*, return to their Wits, and be *sober-minded*! that they would, like the *Prodigal Son*, *come to themselves*, and come to a Resolution to stay no longer in the Devil's Fields, to *feed the Swine* of their own sinful Lusts, but to return to their *Father's House*, where they will be *happy*, and shall be *welcome*.

When Christ was here upon Earth, *healing all manner of Sickness, and all manner of Disease*, there was no one sort of Patients that he had greater Numbers of, than such as were *Lunatick*, and their Lunacy was the Effect of their being *possess'd with the Devil*; it was the miserable Case of many young

young People; we find Parents making Complaints of this kind concerning their Children, one has a Daughter, another has a Son, *grievously vexed with a Devil*; but Christ healed them all, dispossest'd Satan, and so restor'd them to the Possession of their own Souls. And it is said of some whom he thus reliev'd, that they then sat *at the Feet of Jesus clothed, and in their right Mind*; 'tis the Word used in the Text, *Luk. 8. 35*. As far as Sin reigns in you, Satan reigns, and your Souls are in his possession. Christ, by *casting out Devils*, gave a Specimen and Indication of the great Design of his Gospel and Grace, which was to cure Men of *Spiritual Frenzy*, by breaking the Power of Satan in them. O that you would therefore apply your selves to him, submit to the Word of his Grace, pray for the Spirit of his Grace, and by this it will appear, that both these have had their due Influence upon you, if you *sit at the Feet of Jesus in your right Mind*, in a *sober Mind*. And indeed you never *come to your right Mind*, till you do sit down at *the Feet of Jesus*, to learn

f him, and be ruled by him ; you never are truly *rational Creatures*, till in *Christ* you become *new Creatures*.

Secondly, You are all *Sinners*, and *guilty before God* ; conceiv'd in Iniquity, born in Sin ; you are by Nature Children of *Disobedience*, and Children of *Wrath* ; whether you have ever thought of it, or no, certainly it is so, *the Scripture hath concluded you all under Sin*, and consequently under Sentence of Death, like that of a *Physician* upon his *Patient*, when he pronounceth his Disease *mortal* ; nay, like that of a *Judge* upon the *Prisoner*, when he pronounceth his Crime *Capital*, so that both ways your Danger is imminent and extreme. And shall not the Consideration of *this* prevail to make you *sober* ?

Were your Bodies under some threatening Disease, which in all probability would in a little time cut off the Thread of your Life, I believe that would make you *serious*, that would make you look *solemn* ; were you condemn'd to die shortly by the Hand of Justice, that would *sober* you : And is not

not the Death and Ruin of an *immortal* Soul more to be *dreaded* than that of a *mortal* Body? And should not the Danger of that give a louder *Alarm* to the most *secure*, and cast a greater *damp* upon the most *jovial*, than of the *other*?

And when you are told, that tho' the Disease is *mortal*, it is not *incurable*, tho' the Crime is *capital*, it is not *unpardonable*; how should that yet further prevail to make you *serious*, to make you very *sollicitous*, very *industrious* to get the Disease *heal'd*, and the Crime *forgiven*? Your Case will not allow any of your Time or Thoughts to run waste, or to be *trifled away*; but you have need by *Sober-mindedness* to employ both in a due Attendance to the *things that belong to your everlasting Peace*.

You are *Sinners*, and therefore have Reason to think very *meanly* and *hum- bly* of your selves, not to expect *Ap- plauses*, or resent *Contempts*, nor to *aim* at great things in the World. What have such vile Wretches as we are to be *proud of*, or to *promise our selves*

lives in this World, who owe our
lives, which we have a thousand times
surrendered, to the Divine Patience ?

You are *Sinners*, and if yet you are
in a *State of Sin*, in the *Gall of Bit-
terness*, and *Bond of Iniquity*, the
Misery of your State is enough to give
an effectual Check to your *vain Mirth*,
and would do it, if you knew and con-
sider'd it. *Rejoyce not, O Israel, for
joy, as other People, for thou hast
gotten a Whoring from thy God, Hos. 9. 1.
Joy is forbidden Fruit to wicked Peo-
ple. There cannot be a more mon-
strous Absurdity, than that which they
are guilty of, who say to the Almighty,
Depart from us ; who set him at a
Distance, set him at Defiance, and
yet take the Timbrel and Harp, and
rejoyce at the Sound of the Organ, and
spend their Days in Mirth, Job 21.*

2, 13, 14.

If through Grace the Power of Sin
is broken in you, and you are *deliver'd
from the Wrath to come*, and being
in *Christ*, there is *no Condemnation* to
you, yet the very Remembrance of
the Misery and Danger you were in,
and

and are *deliver'd from*, how near you were to the Pit's Brink, and how you were snatch'd *as Brands out of the Burning*, should make you *serious*. You still carry a Body of Death about with you, which should make you cry out, *O wretched Creatures that we are!* you are compass'd about with Enemies that *war against your Souls*; you have not yet *put off the Harness*, but have reason still to fear, lest a *Promise* being *left you of entering into Rest*, any of you should seem to come *short*; and this is enough to make you considerate, and cautious, and *sober-minded*.

In short, till you have by Faith in Christ *made your Peace* with God, and are become sincere Christians, you have no reason to *rejoice at all*; and when you have done it, and have some comfortable Evidence of a blessed Change through Grace wrought in you, you will then have *better things* to rejoyce in, than this World can furnish you with, and having tasted *spiritual Pleasures*, will be dead to all the *Delights of Sense*; offer them to those that know no better. *Thirdly,*

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Thirdly, You are *setting out in a World of Sorrows and Snares, of Troubles and Temptations*, and therefore are concern'd to be *sober-minded*, that you may be arm'd accordingly, so as that the *Troubles* of the World may not rob you of your *Peace*, nor the *Temptations* of it rob you of your *Purity*. Your Way lies thro' a *Wilderness*, a Land of Darknes and Drought, and nothing but *Sober-mindedness* will carry you safe through it to *Canaan*.

Now you are young, and have *the World before you*, you are apt to flatter your selves with a Conceit that every thing will be safe and pleasant ; *your Mountain* you think *stands so strong that it cannot be moved* ; that nothing can shake either your *Integrity*, or your *Prosperity* ; but you little know what this World is, and what Snares there are in every Condition of Life, and every Company ; in all Employments, in all Enjoyments. And if you be careless and vain, and *live at large*, you

D

make

make your selves an *easy Prey* to the Tempter, and are in danger of being carry'd away by *the Course of this World*; you have need therefore to *take heed to your selves, and to keep your Souls diligently*, that is, to be *sober-minded*; for considering the *Corruption that is in the World thro' Lust*, and the Corruption that is in your own Hearts, what may we not fear when they come together?

When the *Restraints* of Education are *taken off*, and you begin to find your selves at liberty, you will meet with so many *enticing Sins* and Sinners, that you will be in danger of falling into *Licentiousness*, and being *undone*, unless the *Impressions* of your Education still *abide*, unless by this *Sober-mindedness* you still be your own Parents, your own Masters, your own Tutors, and by an establish'd *Virtue*, thro' the *Grace of God*, a *Law to your selves*.

You know not what *Trials* and *Troubles* you may be reserved for, but

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but you know that Man who is *born of a Woman* is but *of few Days*, and *full of Trouble*; his Crosses certain, more or less; a Cross to be *taken up daily*; his Comforts uncertain; and should not this make *you sober*, that when Afflictions come, they may not be so terrible as they are to those, who by indulging themselves in Mirth and Pleasure, have made themselves like the *tender and delicate Woman*, that would not set so much as the *Sole of her Foot to the Ground*, for *tendernefs and delicacy*? Deut. 28.

56. Even the common Calamities of human Life press hard upon such, and wound deep; whereas those that live a sober, serious, self-denying Life, are like Christ, *acquainted with Grief*, have made it *familiar* to them, and can the *easier reconcile* themselves to it.

Some of you perhaps are *sickly*, and often *out of Health*; you carry Distempers about with you which tell you what you are; and you are *inexcu-*

sable if you be not thereby made *sober*; if that do not deaden you to the Delights of Sense, and lower your Expectations from the Creature, and dispose you to serious Work. By the *sickness of the Body*, the *Heart* should be made *better*, many an one's *has been*; the Uncertainty of whose *bodily Health* has conduc'd very much to the *Health of their Souls*. Those do indeed *walk contrary* to God that allow themselves in Vanity, while they carry about with them sensible Tokens of their Mortality.

But even the most strong and healthful may *die in their full Strength*, and must die at last. We are all *dying daily*; Death is *working* in us, and we are *walking* towards it, and shall not that make us sober? Theirs was an *unpardonable Crime* that said, *Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*, Isa. 22. 13, 14. That when they were minded by the Prophet of the near Approach of Death, as a Reason why

press'd upon Young People. 77

why they should repent and reform speedily, turn'd it a quite contrary way, and argu'd, if we must have a *short Life*, let it be a *merry one*; surely, saith God, *this Iniquity shall not be purged from you.*

The *End of all things is at hand*, is near at hand with us, *be ye therefore sober*; that whenever our *Lord shall come*, we may be in a good Frame to meet him. When we consider what our Bodies will be shortly, how near a-kin they are to *Corruption and the Worms*, we shall see to bring them up ~~to namber them~~, and are hastening to the *House of Darkness*, where the *Voice of Mirth* is no more heard.

*When th' Hair grows sweet with
Pride and Lust,
The Powder doth forget the Dust.*

Mr. Herbert.

*Fourthly, You see many young
People about you ruin'd and undone,*

and it was *for want of being sober-minded*. Many perhaps you have known *or* might have observ'd, that were born of good Parents, had a religious Education, set out well, were for some time hopeful, and promis'd fair with Buds and Bloffoms, but *ended in the Flesh* after they had *begun in the Spirit*: and it was for want of *Consideration*; they could not be perswaded to think *soberly*; they were *drawn away of their own Lust, and enticed*; and those Enticements were hearken'd to when a dear Ear was turn'd to *Wisdom's Calls* and *Reason and Conscience*; they would not hearken to the Voice of *those Charmers charming never so wisely*.

Some have out-run their Apprenticeships, others have foolishly thrown themselves away in Marriage; others have set up, and made a Flourish awhile, but have soon broke and become Bankrupts, either by living high, or by *grasping at* more Business than they could *grasp*; some have

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have been carry'd away by Atheistical and profane Notions, and others by a loose and vain Conversation; all which would have been happily prevented, if they had been humble and discreet, and duly govern'd their Appetites and Passions.

Others Harms should be your Warnings, to take heed of the Rocks they split upon. Sir *Richard Blackmore*, in his Heroick Poem of *Job*, thus gives the Reason of *Job's* pious Care concerning his Sons, ~~as the Days of their Feasting were~~ gone about.

*For he with mournful Eyes had oft-
ten spy'd,
Scatter'd on Pleasure's smooth, but
treach'rous Tide,
The Spoils of Virtue overpower'd by
Sense,
And floating Wrecks of ruin'd In-
nocence.*

Fifthly, You are *here in this World upon your Trial for Heaven*. O that you would firmly believe this, not only that you are *hastening apace into Eternity*, but that it will certainly be to you a *comfortable* or a *miserable* Eternity, according to what you are and do while you are in the Body ; and this Consideration, one would think, should make you *sober*.

Eternal Life is *set before you*, Eternal Happiness in the Vision and Fruition of God ; you may make it sure if it be not your ~~own Fault~~, may *lay hold* on it if you look about you now. There are *substantial* Honours, *satisfying* Pleasures, and *true* Riches, in comparison with which all the Riches, Honours and Pleasures of this World are empty Names and Shadows : These may be your Portion for ever, they shall be so, if by a *patient Continuance in Well-doing*, through Christ, you *seek for this Glory, Honour and Immortality*. You are here Probationers
for

press'd upon Young People. 81

for the *best* Preferment, for a Place in the *New Jerusalem*; you stand Candidates for a *Crown, a Kingdom, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*; you *stand fair* for it; and is it not Time to think then? To think seriously, and soberly to apply your selves to that Business for which you were sent into this World, and which if it be done faithfully, you may remove with Comfort to another World; but if not, your Remove to that World will be *terrible*? You ought to be serious and circumspect now, because as you *spend your Time*, so you are likely to spend your Eternity; and a *great deal of Work* you have to do, and but *little Time* to do it in.

Let me put the Case to you as to this World: If a wise and wealthy Man should take one of you that had but little, and tell you you should come into his Family, and he would provide Food and Clothing for you for *one Year*; and

if you carried your self well for *that Year*, would submit to the prudent Discipline of his Family, would be observant of him, and take care to please him, that then at the Year's End he would give you Ten Thousand Pounds ; but if you were rude and ungovernable, he would turn you out of doors ; would not this put you upon considering ? Would it not make you *sober* ? Would you not deny your selves the Gratification of many a Desire, for fear of displeasing such a Benefactor ? If he were never so *humour*some, you would *humour* him, when it was so much your Interest. This is your Case ; the *Time* of your Probation is but short ; the *Terms* are easy and reasonable ; the God you are to please is not *hard to be pleas'd*, nor will impose any Thing upon you but what becomes you, and will be pleasant to you ; the Happiness he proposeth is infinitely more worth
than

press'd upon Young People. 83

than *Thousands of Gold and Silver*; and the Security he gives is the inviolable Promise of one that *cannot lye nor deceive*: The Misery, if you come short of it, is worse than being *turn'd out of Doors*, 'tis to be cast into *utter Darkness*. *Life and Death, Good and Evil, the Blessing and the Curse* are set before you, and will you not then *set your Hearts to all the Words which we testify unto you*? Will you not *think soberly*, that you may make sure Work in a Matter of such vast Importance, on which your Lives and the Lives of your Souls depend? You are here upon your *good Behaviour*, and therefore are concern'd to *behave your selves well*; for if you do not, *Son, Remember*, will be a dreadful Peal rung in your Ears shortly; remember how fair thou stood'st for Happiness, and what the *Morsel of Meat* was, for which, like profane *Esau*, thou *soldest that Birth-right*.

Lastly,

Lastly, You must shortly go to Judgment. With the Consideration of this, Solomon endeavours to make his young Man sober, that's for walking in the Way of his Heart, and in the Sight of his Eyes ; Know thou, that for all these Things God shall bring thee into Judgment ; and thou that makest a Jest of every thing, shalt not be able to turn that off with a Jest hereafter, however thou mayst think to do it now, Eccl. 11. 9. This likewise he urgeth upon his Pupil in the Close of that Book, as a Reason why he should be religious ; By these, my Son, be admonished to fear God, and keep his Commandments ; for God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret thing ; Eccl. 12. 12, 13, 14.

Young Men that have *strict Masters*, who will call them to an Account how they *spend their Time*, and how they go *on with their Business*, are thereby oblig'd to Industry

press'd upon Young People. 85

stry and Care; whereas if the Master be *careless*, the Servant is in Temptation to be so too: but know, that you have a *Master in Heaven*, whose Eye is always upon you, and follows you closer than the Eye of any Master on Earth can: He knows and observes all you do, all you say, all you think; and an Account is kept of it in the Book of his Omniscience and your own Conscience. These *Books* will shortly be *open'd*, and not only all *review'd*, but you will be *judg'd* accordingly; and are you not then concern'd to think, and speak, and act accordingly? When you are vain and frothy, and your Converse loose and profane, should not this be a Check upon you, and make you sober, to think, *How will this look* when it comes to be look'd over again? *How will it pass*, when I pass my Trials for Eternity?

Your *Bodies* are *mortal*, your *Souls* are *immortal*; therefore let
not

not Sin reign either in the one or in the other ; you are dying, are dying daily ; *in the midst of Life*, nay in the Beginning of it, *we are in Death* ; you may die *this Day*, may die *in Youth*, and the *number of your Months be cut off in the midst* ; and you know that *after Death the Judgment* ; and as your State is *fix'd* in the particular Judgment at Death, so it will be *found* in the general Judgment at the End of Time, and so it will *remain* to Eternity. How *awful*, how *dreadful* the Appearance of the Judge will be in the *Great Day*, the Word of God has again and again told us ; *Knowing therefore those Terrors of the Lord*, the Terrors of that Day, *we persuade Men*, we persuade *young Men* to be *sober-minded* ; and therefore to let their *Moderation*, that is, their *Sober-mindedness*, their good Government and Management of themselves be *known unto all Men*, because the
Lord

press'd upon Young People. 87

Lord is at hand. The Judge standeth before the Door.

For Application.

You see now what is expected from you that are *young*, and how *justly* it is expected, you see both from the *Word of God*; and now shall I entreat you to *make use* of what I have said, to make it *useful* to your selves, that this Discourse may not be lost upon you.

First, Shall I desire you to *examine your selves*, that you may *know your own selves*, and take heed of being mistaken in your Judgment concerning yourselves. Can your Hearts witness for you, that through the Grace of God, by remembring your selves and your Creator *in the Days of your Youth*, you are become in some measure *sober-minded*, and answer this *beautiful Character of young People*? I hope I speak to many such; and the Misery is, that those who most need

need these Instructions and Warnings, come least in the way of them; they will not hear them, will not read them, because they resolve they will not *heed* them, or be ruled by them.

But to you that are *sober-minded*, I say as Christ did to the *faithful ones* in *Thyatira*, *I will lay upon you no other Burden but that which you have already*; and I am sure you will agree to call it *a light Burden*: *Hold fast till Christ comes*; hold fast your Integrity, hold fast your *Sober-mindedness*.

Some are more inclin'd to Soberness in their *natural Temper* than others are, to them these Laws of *Sober-mindedness* will be easier than to others; but to them that are *not so*, though it be more *difficult*, yet withal more *necessary*, Wisdom, and Grace and Consideration are intended for the *checking* of the Disorders of the *natural Temper*.

But take heed lest you *deceive* your selves and be more forward
than

press'd upon Young People. 89

than there is Cause, to rank your
selves among the *sober-minded*, and
to think that you need not these
Admonitions. 'Tis not a sober
Look that will serve, though that's
graceful enough, if it be not affect-
ed and forc'd ; but 'tis the sober
Mind that we are pressing earnestly
upon you : Examine that now, for
God will examine that, and judge
of you by it ; when you shall find,
that to be *carnally minded* is *Death*,
but to be *spiritually minded* is *Life*
and *Peace*.

Secondly, Shall I desire you to
exhort your selves ; so some read
that which we translate, *Exhort one*
another : Preach to your own
hearts, preach over this Sermon to
them. Let all young People charge
and admonish and encourage them-
selves to be *Sober-minded*.

Let those that have *loose Notions*
in Religion, and are fond of any
suggestions, tho' never so *absurd*,
which *derogate* from the Authority
and

and Honour of the *Scriptures* and *Reveal'd Religion*, exhort themselves to be *sober-minded*, and not to be *carry'd about* with every Wind, nor *carry'd away* from the great Principles of Christianity, *by the Craft of them who lie in wait to deceive*, and bring them to *downright Atheism*.

Let those that are drawn in, or are in danger of being drawn in to the ruining Sins of *Drunkennes* or *Uncleanness*, that have been so fatal to Multitudes of young People, exhort themselves to be *sober-minded*, to sit down and consider seriously *what will be in the End thereof*, and how dreadful that Destruction is which these vicious Courses certainly lead to. Except you *repent and reform*, you must *perish*, must eternally perish, if the Word of God be true you must; and how miserable will your Case be, if you bring it to this Dilemma, that either God must *be false*, or you must *be damn'd*.

press'd upon Young People. 91

Let those that spend their time in carnal Mirth, and sensual Pleasures, whose Business is nothing but Sport and Pastime, and their converse nothing but Banter and Buffoonry, exhort themselves to be sober-minded, sometimes to be serious, and consider themselves; and try if they can make it as pleasant to themselves to think in earnest, as it is now to talk in jest; for I'm sure 'twill be abundantly more profitable.

Let those young People that are themselves with Hopes of getting that easily and quickly, which they love above any thing, but are not willing to be at the Pains of getting honestly, exhort themselves to be sober-minded, and to consider what a sinful way this is of trading with what they have, and which they cannot in Faith pray to God to bless and prosper them in; to consider that whether they win or lose, they can have no true Comfort

fort, no Joy of their *Gains*, for it is *Wealth gotten by Vanity*, that has a Curse attending it ; nor any Support under their *Losses*, for they are owing to their own Sin and Folly. How many Apprentices have been brought by their Love of Gaming to *rob* their Masters, and so to *ruin themselves* ! And how many young Gentlemen have sunk their Estates, and young Tradesmen their Stocks and Business by it ! And will you, for want of *one sober Thought*, solit upon the *same Rock* ? Let those who are allur'd into this *Snare*, in to the Beginnings of it, dread it, and keep at the utmost Distance from it ; and let those who are taken in it break out of it immediately with Resolution ; *Do this now, my Son, deliver thy self as a Roe from the Hand of the Hunter.*

Let *young Dealers in the World* that are entering into Business, exhort themselves to be *sober-minded*, to set out under the Conduct of Religion and true Wisdom ; to love
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their Business, to *apply themselves*, and *accommodate themselves* to it. Let them learn betimes to *take care*; for nothing will be done to purpose without it; to attend the Work of their Callings with Diligence, and *order the Affairs of them with Discretion*, and in all *their Ways to acknowledge God*; then are they likely to *prosper*, and to *have good Success*.

Let *young Professors of Religion*, that by the Grace of God have *escaped the Corruption that is in the World*, and given up their Names to Jesus Christ, exhort themselves to be *sober-minded in their Profession*. Let them take heed of *Conceitedness*, and spiritual Pride, of *Confidence* in themselves, and their own Judgment and Ability; let them aim to be *best* rather than to be the *greatest* in the Kingdom of God among Men. Let them take heed of running into Extremes, and of falling into Bigotry, and Censoriousness; let them be sober in their
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Opinions of Truth and Falshood, Good and Evil, of others and of themselves ; expecting that Age and Experience will rectify many of their present Mistakes.

Let *young Scholars*, whose Genius leads them to Books and Learning, exhort themselves to be *sober minded* ; you soon find that you must be serious, must be much so, must learn to *think*, and to think *closely*, or you'll never make any thing of it ; 'tis not enough to read but you must study and digest what you read. But that's not all, in your Pursuits of Knowledge you must be *sober*, not *exercising your selves in things too high for you*, nor boasting your selves of your Attainments ; be humble in the Use of what you *do know*, using it for Edification, not for Ostentation ; but a *windy Knowledge that puffeth up*, that only is good for *some thing that doth good*, 1 Cor. 8. Be humble likewise in your Enquiries after what you *would know*

press'd upon Young People. 95

not coveting to be *wise above what is written*, or to *intrude into those things which you have not seen*, as many who are vainly *puffed up with a fleshly Mind* ; but *be wise unto Sobriety*. But willing to be *in the dark* about that which God has not thought fit to *reveal*, and *in doubt* about that which he has not thought fit to *determine*. This is very well express'd by the learned *Grotius* in a *Poem* of his,

Nescire velle quæ Magister Maximus

Docere non vult, erudita inscitia est.

To recommend this *Sober-mindedness* to all of you that are young, this *Seriousness*, and *Sedateness* of Spirit, and an Aptness to *consider* ; will you be convinced of what *great Advantage* it will be to you every way ?

i. Thus

1. Thus you will escape the *Vanity that Childhood and Youth is subject to*, and rescue those precious Years from it. 'Twill keep them from *running waste*, as commonly they do, like *Water spilt upon the Ground*, which cannot be gathered up again, and will do much toward the filling up of the *empty Spaces* even of *those Years*. When *Solomon* had observ'd that *Childhood and Youth is Vanity*, he immediately adds for the Cure of that *Vanity*, *Remember now thy Creator in the Days of thy Youth*, that is, in one word, *be serious*.

By using your selves to *Consideration*, you will come to be aware of the *Snares* your spiritual Enemies lay for you, of the *Snake* under the green Grass, and will not be impos'd upon so easily as many are by the Wiles of Satan; and by habituating your selves to *Self-denial* and *Mortification* of the Flesh and a holy *Contempt* of this World you will wrest the most dangerous Weapon

Weapons out of the Hand of the *strong Man armed*, and will take from him that part of his *Armour*, in which he most *trusted*, for 'tis by the *World* and the *Flesh* that he mostly fights against us : Nay, and this *Sober-mindedness* will put upon you the *whole Armour of God*, that you may be able to *stand in the evil Day* ; and so to *resist the Devil*, as that he may *flee from you*.

This *Sober-mindedness* will prevent many a Temptation which a *vain Mind* invites, and courts, and throws Men into the way of ; and will shut and lock the Door against the Tempter, who when he finds it so, will give it up ; and his Agents will be apt to do so too, concluding it *in vain* to tempt the sober Mind ; they will do as *Naomi*, who when she saw that *Ruth* was *steadfastly minded*, left off speaking to her.

2. Thus you will recommend your selves to the Favour of God, and of all wise and good Men ; will
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obtain that *good Name* which is better than *precious Ointment*, and more fragrant ; a Name for good things with God and good People.

God will *love* those that *love him*, and *seek him early* ; and will never forget this *Kindness of your Youth* for serious Godliness. If you thus give him the *first* of your *First Fruits*, it will be an *acceptable* Offering to him. The belov'd Disciple was the youngest. And it is said of that young Man, who ask'd that serious Question, and ask'd it soberly, *Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal Life?* that *Jesus beholding him, loved him* Mark 10. 21. As he was likewise well pleased with another, that answered discreetly, *υπερως*, like one that had a *sober Mind*, Mat. 21. 34. And that Humility and Quietness of Spirit, which is one Branch of the sober Mind, is an Ornament, which where-ever it is found, especially in young People, is in the sight of God of great Price ; and that's v

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valuable indeed which he *values*, and by it we ought to *value our selves*.

Nor is it an Argument to be *despis'd by you*, that all sober People that know you, will love you, and will have *no greater Joy* than to see you live *soberly*: But it is an Argument the rather to be *insisted upon by us*, because *young People* are commonly very much influenc'd by *Reputation*, and have an Eye to that more than any thing in the Government of themselves, and the Choice of their way; now it is certain *Reputation* is on *Religion's* side, and if the Matter be rightly understood, will help to *turn* the Scale for *Sober-mindeness*. 'Tis true there are some, there are many, to whom a young Man will recommend himself by being *loose* and *extravagant*, and talking at random against that which is serious: but what kind of People are they? Are they not the *Fools in Israel*? Are they not Sots or Fops, whose Valuation of Persons and Things is not at all to be va-

lued? But do not all discreet and considerate People esteem a young Man that is *sober*, and shew him respect, and converse with him, and put a Confidence in him; 'tis the Character of a *Citizen of Zion*, that *in his eyes a vile person is contemned*, tho' he set up for a *Wit*, or a *Beau*, yet if he be loose and profane, he despiseth him as a Fool, and a Flash; but he *honours them that fear the Lord*, and live conscientiously. Now to which of these would you recommend yourselves? Whose Opinion would you covet to stand *right* in; to stand *high* in? Would you not chuse to have *Credit* with Men of Virtue and Probity, and that are themselves *in Reputation for Wisdom and Honour*; and to be laid in their Bosoms, rather than to be hugg'd and caress'd, and cry'd up by those that being *Slaves* to their Pleasures can never be *Masters* of true Reason? Especially considering that these young People who are

truly

truly *sober, serious, and conscientious*, provided they take care to avoid Affectation and Superciliousness, will be *loved and respected* even by those that are themselves loose and vain; and will be *manifested in their Consciences* one time or other, that they are the most *valuable* young Men. And I think it is worth considering, and would bear a Debate, whether ordinary sober serious People do not *love their Friends* and Companions *better* than vain loose People do *theirs*, and are not more ready to do them true Service?

3. Thus you will *prepare for a useful Life*, if it please God you live long, and *for a comfortable one*. Those that are *sober-minded* when they are young, as they are thereby *fortified against every evil Word and Work*, so they are *furnished for every good Word and Work*, and are likely to be in their *Day Vessels for honour fit for our Master's use*; while the ludicrous and

unthinking live to be at the best the unprofitable Burthens of the Earth, and *good for nothing*.

Young People that are *sober*, are likely to *be good*, and *do good*, in every Relation, and Condition of Life; that are sober when they are *Children* and *Servants*, that do the Duties, and improve the Advantages of their *Learning Age*, and behave themselves prudently then, are in the fitting up hereafter to have the Charge of Families themselves, to which they are likely to be great Blessings, and to the Places in which they live. They will not only be the Joy of their Parents Hearts while they live, but an Honour to their Memories when they are gone; and thus the *Children* will *rise up and call the* discreet and virtuous *Mother, blessed*, by treading in her Steps, and producing the good Fruits, of their prudent and religious Education.

Young Men that are *sober-minded* are likely to be in time *serviceable*

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to the Communities they are Members of, *Civil* or *Sacred*, in a *higher* or *lower* Sphere. They may be called to the *Magistracy* or *Ministry*, to serve the State, to serve the Church; but few ever come to do real Service or Credit to either, or to be of Account in *either* of those *Posts of Honour*, unless they be *sober-minded* when they are *young*. Lose the *Morning*, and you lose the *Day*. But tho' they may not arrive to such a publick Station, yet they may in a *private* Capacity be eminently useful to their *Neighbours* in the Things of the world, and to their *Fellow-Christians* in divine Things, and so be Instruments of Glory to God. They that are *sober-minded* when they are *young*, if they go on as they begin, what will the *Wisdom* be which the *Multitude of their Years* will *teach*? *Obadiah* that *feared the Lord from his Youth*, came to *fear him greatly*. Young Saints, we hope, will be eminent ones.

4. Thus you will *prepare for a happy Death*, if it please God you should *die quickly*, and may then *die chearfully*. O that young People were so wise as to *consider their latter End*, not only as *sure*, but as *near*; for it is Folly for the youngest, and strongest, and most *healthful* to put far from them the *Day of Death*, when Death is every day working in us.

Now the best Preparation you can make for it, if you should *die in Youth*, is to live soberly: Then the Sting of it will be *taken out*, through Christ, and consequently the Terror of it *taken off*; and therefore tho' you may pray with the Psalmist, *O my God, take me not away in the midst of my Days*, yet if the Cup may not pass away, you need not *dread* it, you know the worst that Death can do you, if it shorten your Life on Earth, that will be abundantly made up in a better Life. *Abijah* that sober Youth, *in whom was found some good*

press'd upon Young People. 105

good Things towards the Lord God of Israel in the House of Jeroboam, dies in the Flower of his Age; but there's no harm done him, he comes to his Grave in Peace, and goes to Heaven triumphantly, 1 Kings 14. 13. Whereas those that are loose and extravagant, if they die in Youth, (as Elihu speaks, Job 36. 14.) their Soul dieth; so 'tis in the Original, they are spiritually dead, twice dead: While they liv'd in Pleasure, they were dead though they liv'd; and therefore when they die in Sin, they are twice dead, and their Life, their Life on t'other side Death, is among the Unclean, among the Sodomites, (so the Margin reads it) who suffer the Vengeance of eternal Fire, Jude 7, 12.

Let me now close with some *general Directions to Young People*, which may be of use to them, in order to the making of them *sober-minded.*

1. *Esppouse sober Principles* ; for Men are as their Principles are. In these avoid Extremes, and in the less weighty Matters of the Law keep the Mean, that you may reserve your Zeal for the great Things of God, the Things that *belong to your everlasting Peace*. Take heed on the one hand of Bigotry in the Circumstances of Religion, and on the other hand of Lukewarmness and Indifferency in the Essentials of it.

Fix such Principles as these to your selves with reference to the main Matter ; that *God's Favour is better than Life*, and *his Displeasure worse than Death* ; that *Sin is the greatest Evil* ; that *the Soul is the Man*, and *that's best for us that's best for our Souls* ; that *Jesus Christ is all in all to us*, and *we are undone without an Interest in him* ; that *it is as much our Wisdom as it is our Duty to be religious* ; that *the World has not that in it which will make us happy* ; that *Time and the Things*

Things of Time are nothing in comparison with Eternity and the Things of Eternity. These and such as these are Principles of Eternal Truth ; and our firm Belief of them, and Adherence to them, will be to us of Eternal Consequence.

And as to other Things, let your Principles be, that *God is no Respector of Persons, but in every Nation he that fears God, and works Righteousness, is accepted of him, and therefore ought to be so of us ; that the Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteousness and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost ; and he that in these Things serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and approved of Men.* By such Principles as these keep up Moderation and Sober-mindedness in your Profession of Religion, which will contribute much to the promoting of it in every Thing else.

2. *Dwell much upon such Considerations as are proper to make you sober.*

sober-minded. Be frequent in Meditation upon serious Things, *the great Things* of the Law and Gospel, and let not them be look'd upon as *foreign Things*. *As you think in your Heart, so you are.* If the *Imagination of the Thought of the Heart* be vain and corrupt, if *that Eye be evil*, the whole Man will be accordingly; but if that be *serious*, the Affections and Aims will be sober too. However you may allow the *outward Thoughts* to be sometimes *diverting*, the *inward Thoughts* must be reserv'd for that which is directing.

Think much of the *Eye of God* which is always upon you, that you may be careful to *approve your selves to him* in every Thing; of the *Glory of God*, which you ought always to have *your Eye upon*, that you may *answer the End* of your Creation; think much of the *many Sins* you have committed against God, that you may give Diligence to make sure the Pardon of them; and
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of the *many Mercies* you have received from God; that you may study what returns you shall make for his Favour; think much of the *Opportunities* you enjoy, that you may be busy to improve them; and of the *spiritual Enemies* you are compass'd about with, that you may be *sober and vigilant* in guarding against them.

The Four Last Things, Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell, are commonly recommended as proper Subjects of Meditation, in order to the making of the Mind *serious*. Because the End of all Things is at hand, and that End an entrance upon a State *without end*, be ye *therefore sober*; and check Vanity with that Consideration.

I have somewhere read of one that had been a great Courtier and Statesman in Queen *Elizabeth's* Time, I think it was Secretary *Walsingham*; that in his advanced years he retir'd into privacy in the Country, whither some of his
plea-

pleasant Companions came to see him, and told him he was *melancholy*: No, saith he, *I am serious, and 'tis fit I should be so; for all are serious round about me, and why then should not you and I be serious?* God is serious in observing of us, Christ is serious in interceding for us, the Spirit is serious in striving with us, the Truths of God are serious Truths, his Laws, his Promises, his Threatnings, all serious; Angels are serious in their Administration to us, our spiritual Enemies serious in their Attempts against us; glorified Saints are serious in the Embraces of Divine Love; poor damned Sinners cannot but be serious under the Pourings out of Divine Wrath; and we our selves shall be serious shortly.

3. *Chuse sober Company.* Nothing is of greater Consequence to young People than what Company they keep, for we *insensibly* grow like those with whom we converse, especially with whom we *delight* to converse.

Man

press'd upon Young People. III

Many that were thought to be soberly inclin'd, have had their good Inclinations turn'd the contrary way, by keeping vain and loose Company, which perhaps at first they were not aware of any Danger by, but thought their Conversation innocent enough. Tho' *ill Company* perhaps bears more blame sometimes than it deserves, from those who think to excuse themselves by laying the fault on their Companions; yet it is agreed to have been of most *pernicious* Consequence to Multitudes that set out well.

If therefore you would be wise and good, chuse such for your Associates and Bosom-Friends as will give you good Advice, and set you good Examples; *He that walketh with wise Men, is wise, or would be wise, and he shall be wise, when a Companion of Fools is deceived, and shall be destroyed.* Keep at a distance from loose and vain Company, for who can touch Pitch and not be defil'd? Who can converse familiarly with those that are wic-

wicked and profane, and not contract Guilt or Grief, or both? If you resolve, as *David* did, to keep the *Commandments of your God*, you must say to Evil-doers as he did, *Depart from me, Psal. 119. 115.* and be as he was, *Companions of all those that fear God, ver. 63.* and let your Delight be in the *excellent ones of the Earth*, the sober ones.

4. *Read sober Books.* Those that are given to reading, are as much under the Influence of the Books they read, as of the Persons they converse with; and therefore in the Choice of them you need to be very *cautious*, and take Advice. Nothing more promotes Vanity, especially among the *refined* part of Mankind than Romances, and Plays, and *loose* Poems; and thus even their *Solitudes* and *Retirements*, which we hope might contribute to their Seriousness, are *lost*, and make them more *vain*, and more *ingeniously* so.

press'd upon Young People. 113

Let us therefore take the same Method to make us *sober*, more *sober*; converse with those Books which are substantial, and judicious, out of which we may learn *Wisdom*. The Book of God is given us on purpose to make us *wise to Salvation*; make it familiar to you, and let it *dwell in you richly*. Let it lead you, let it *talk with you*, and do you follow it, and talk with it, *Prov. 6. 22.* And many other good Books we have to help us to understand and apply the Scripture, which we should be conversant with. Enquire not for *merry* Books, Songs, and Jests; but serious Books, which will help to put you into, and keep you in a serious Frame.

5. *Abound much in sober Work.* Habits are contracted by frequent Acts; if therefore you would have a *sober Mind*, employ yourselves much in Meditation and Prayer, and other devout and holy Exercises. And in these let your *Hearts* be *fixed*, and let *all that is within you* be

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be employ'd. Be much in *secret* Worship, as well as *diligent* and *constant* in your Attendance on *publick* Ordinances; those who neglect these, cannot but lose their *Seriousness*.

And see to it that you be very *serious* when you are about *serious* Work, that you profane not the holy things. I look upon it to be in young People as happy an Indication of a *serious Mind*, and as hopeful an Omen of a *serious Life*, as any other, to be *reverent* and *serious* in *the Worship of God*. For it is a sign the Vanity of the Mind runs high and strong indeed, when even there it will not be restrain'd from Indecencies; and he is loose indeed that is *most in all evil, in the midst of the Congregation and Assembly*, Prov. 14. The Greatness of the God with whom you have to do, and the Greatness of the Concern you have to do with him in, when you are engaged in his Worship, should strike an Awakenment upon you, and make you *serious*.

And

press'd upon Young People. 115

And have this in your Eye in all religious Exercises, that by them you may be made *more serious*; and that the Impressions of other holy Exercises may be the deeper, and take the faster hold, let me *advise* young People that are *sober-minded* to come betimes to the Ordinance of the *Lord's-Supper*. Let me *press* it upon them, not only as a Duty they owe to Christ, but as that which will be of great *Advantage* to themselves to strengthen to their Resolutions, *with Purpose of Heart to cleave to the Lord*.

Those who keep off from it, 'tis either because they know they *are not* sober-minded, or because they are not determin'd to *continue so*; but none of you will own either of those Reasons. Delay not therefore, by that most sacred solemn Bond, to *join your selves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant, never to be forgotten*.

And how do you like this *sober serious* Work you have now been about

116 *Sober-mindedness, &c.*

about in *hearing*, or *reading* this Discourse? Have you been in it as in *your Element*, or as a Fish upon dry Ground? Have you suffer'd this Word of Exhortation, and bidden it welcome? Shall I leave you all resolv'd in the Strength of God's Grace, that now in the Days of your Youth you will be *sober-minded*? If so, *The Lord keep it always in the Imagination of the Thought of your Heart*, and by writing the Law of Sobriety there, *establish your Way before him!*

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